ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರು.—ಈ ವಿಷಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾನ್ಯ ಸದಸ್ಯರು ನನ್ನ ಕೊಠಡಿಗೆ ಬಂದು ಮಾತನಾಡಿದರೆ ಒಳ್ಳೆಯದು.

CALLING ATTENTION TO AMATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

(*i*) *re:* **Fall in price of Potato and loss to the formers**

SRI M. V. RAJASEKHARAN (Uttarahalli)—

I call the attention of the Hon. Minister for Sericulture and Horticulture to the serious loss caused to the farmers on account fo all in prices of potato and the urgent need for the Government to come to their aid.

SRI K.B. SHIVAIAH (Minister for Sericulture and Horticulture).—I wish to make Statement in response to the calling attention notices by Sri B. N. Bache Gowda, M.L.A. and Sri M. V. Rajashekaran, regarding fall of price of potato.

During last season i.e. during January, February 1979, there was a bumper crop of potato in Northern States. Hence the surplus produce of Northern States has been rushed to the wholesale marnts of Tamil Nadu, Bombay and Karnataka. Because of this there has been a sharp fall in potato price during the first fortnight of April, 1979. Now, from 25-4-79 onwards, as can, be seen from the following statement the potato price has been steadily increasing.

Statement showing the details of the potato price in the wholesale market, Yeshwanthapura, Bangalore for the last 15 days.

Date	Minimum rate per quintal	Maximum
12-4-79	Rs. 60/-	Rs. 84/
16-4-79	Rs. 48/-	Rs. 78/-
17-4-79	Rs. 60/-	Rs. 80/-
18-4-79	Rs. 60/-	Rs. 80/-
19-4-79	Rs. 60/-	Rs. 78/-
20-4-79	Rs. 50/-	Rs. 70/-
21-4-79	Rs. 56/-	Rs. 64/-
23-4-79	Rs. 60/-	Rs. 82/-
24-4-79	Rs. 42/-	Rs. 88/-
25-4-79	Rs. 76/-	Rs. 84/
26-4-79	Rs. 74/-	Rs. 94/-
27-4-79	Rs. 80/-	Rs. 96/-
28-4-79	Rs. 70/-	Rs. 95/-

Potato is an important subsidiary crop in the state. During 1978-79, the area under potato was 21,152 hectares. Out of this 11,864 hectares are cultivated during khariff season and the rest of 9,288 hectares during rabi season.

During kharif season, potato is grown in the Districts of Hassan, Chickmagalur, Belgaum and Dharwar and during rabi season it is grown in Kolar, Bangalore, Hassan, Chickmagalur and Belgaum Districts. This year, the total production of potato has been estimated at 3,70,160 tonnes.

During the years 1976-77 and 77-78 the potato production was 3,07,830 tonnes and 3,20,856 tonnes respectively. There is an increased production of about 50,000 tonnes when compared to the production of 1977-78 and about 63,000 tonnes compared to the production of 1976-77.

The area under potato during the year 1978-79 has been increased compared to the previous two years.

Year	Area in Hectares
1976-77	19,860
1977-78	19,464
1978-79	21,152

The State Government shares the anxiety of the Hon'ble Members and the potato growers in regard to the declining price trends, which have been noticed only during this year. The methods to give redress to the farmers by arranging for experts through some Agency of the Central Government or State Government are under consideration. Government will also examine the question of having a term strategy to stabilize the prices. Ultimately, the solution could be to have a series of well-organised cole storages in which the crop can be stored during harvest and released to the market during the season. This, as the Hon'ble Members will appreciate, is a process which requires finances and time.

The assure the members that all such steps as would further the interests of the farmers would be taken.

SRI M. V. RAJASEKHARAN.—The hon. Minister's statement does not say anything except giving the actual figures of potato which is under production in the State and also the prevailing rates of the prices in the whole-sale market. Of course, he has mentioned about cold storage facilities I wish he could have got all the figures being himself a farmer, before he came before the House, not only from government sources but also from other sources. The cost of production

is 90 rupees per quintal. The Hon. Minister gives the minimum and maximum prices. In rainfed zone it is Rs. 65 per quintal. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether these prices are remunerative. As per the regulated market whole-sale prices, the farmer gets a maximum price of 95 rupees ; this has to include the transportation cost, marketing fee plus your other expenses which will come to another 10-15 per cent. Would you consider this remunerative price for the farmer ? The second point which I would like to ask the hon. Minister is why there has been such a delay in offering cold storage facilities to the farmers. Karnataka is one of the major potato producing countries in the southen region. Why is there such a delay ? Not only should you provide cold storage facilities but also marketing finance. I am sorry government has not given any consideration to this. He has completely ignored providing marketing finance. The statement gives the impression that because the farmer has grown more, the prices have fallen down. Whenever the farmer works hard and produces more, you see the prices falling down and he incurs heavy loss and gets into debt. This is one aspect which the government has to consider.

What are the steps taken so far as processing is concerned ? Potato can be dehydrated and released. Has the government considered this point ?

2-00 p.m.

Now these are the factors which the Government has to take into consideration but I am sorry, the Government does not say anything about it. I don't want to take much of the time of the House. I would like to conclude. My lost point is this. As you know, one of the most important thing while calculating at the cost factor of the production is the seed. Our farmers are paying heavy price while getting the seeds from outside. As I know, I am sure the Hon. Minister also knows about it, the Karnataka has got second place sofar as growing of the seed is concerned. Karnataka has got many places which are very congenial to grow the potato seeds. For example, Kenmanagundi, Coorg area and other places are suitable to grow these seeds. Coming to my own district, i.e., in Kanakapura, Basavanakatte area is very congenial for growing the potato seeds. It can be grown near village i.e., Torbeedhi which is about 6 miles from my village, where a very high elevation is there. You can grow the potato seeds there also. Why the Government has not taken any action to find out the possibilities of growing the seed potato. This is one of the factors which contributes to the increase

of the cost of production. Therefore, I would plead with the Government to give serious consideration to this, aspect of the matter. Today, what is happening ? All the prices of various other commodities including the inputs are going up. Take for example the iron and Steel. The Iron and Steel price which was about Rs. 2,800 about a month and a half back, has reached the price of Rs. 4,500 today. Even then, it is not available.

The farmer's plough which was costing Rs. 15/- is today being sold at Rs. 30-32. How can a Farmer get the money to buy all these things ? The Government should consider all these points and see that immediate steps are taken to solve the problems of the farmers.

Regarding cold-storage facilities, I would like to say something. Very ner to this place, in the Farmers' Forum compound, there is a cold-storage which has got 1,200 tonnes capacity and 800 tonnes capacity has been reserved specially for the farmers of the potato growers but who is using that facility today ? It is the apple merchants in the market who are utilising this cold-storage facilities, which is available in the Farmers' Forum compound. When I was the General Secrtary. about 20 years back, I got it established with the idea of helping the potato growers. But unfortunately, it is not being fully utilised by them. Will the Government give more attention to this and see that this falling of prices are immediately stopped and other necessary steps which I have just now proposed are taken ?

SRI K.B. SHIVAIAH :—Sir we have not come across the contingency which has been mentioned by the hon. Member about marketing, so far, I would like to mention here that because of bumper crop, the present market prices are less than Rs. 50 per quintal even in Punjab and U. P. But, comparing to other Northern States, we are far superior. There is no scope for exports of all the commodities that we grow and such being the case, naturally, the prices of agricultural commidities including potato, will fall down. The question is, how to protect them and what is the procedure to be adopted by the Government under such exigencies ? We have already got a cold storage facilities upte 6,000 tonnes and further we want to increase it to another 2000 tonnes by establishing the Cold Storage Centres at Mysore, Hubli and another one in Kolar also, in the near future. This we will consider accordinn to the financial facilities available within our limits. Now the Union Government is ser ously thanking of having a price-support scheme. When this scheme is introduced, we will also consider giving effect to it. We are ready to give the support price to those people who come under this difficulty. We are

also considering the de hydration of potatoes. Merely by doing this, we cannot solve the problem completely ; but only to some extent, we can solve the problem. But this is one of the aspects which can be considered Then for growing seed potato, we have already started the seed farms in B. R. Hills and we are thinking of starting another one at Kemmannagundi and also in some other places, wherever, it is possible. I would like to say that some times we will get bumper crops and the ryots have to face some problems inevitably. Here, the Central Government has to assist and also the State Government. From this year, we have to think seriously about the falling of prices suddenly.

SRI M. V. RAJASHEKARAN.—The Hon. Minister was telling that asfar as the support prices is concerned, they are already having discussions with the Central Government and they are thinking of giving the support price. I would like to know whether the Hon. Minister is aware of the fact that though the support price is there, it has not been applied to the State of Karnataka ? If it is not applied, I would like to know why it is not applied and why the Government has not protested to the Central Government ?

SRI K. B. SHIVAIAH.—Here, it is above Rs. 50/-

SRI M. V. RAJASHEKARAN.—It is for the Government to plead for the increase in the support price. When are you going to take action in this regard ? I would like to know when are you going to give the support price ?

SRI K. B. SHIVAIAH.—My hon. Friend's apprehension is that the Government is keeping quiet. The Government is not keeping quiet. The Central Government has at present fixed the support price at Rs. 50/- but we are reaching upto Rs. 100 i.e., double the support price.

SRI M. V. RAJASHEKARAN.—The Hon. Minister says that he is not keeping quiet but my concern is that he is not keeping quiet but he is sleeping.

(ii) re. non-posting of a Commerce Leeturer in Junior College, Banavar, Arasikere Taluk.

SRI D.B. GANGADHARAPPA.—Sir, I call the attention of the Minister for Education to the non-posting of a Commerce Lecturer in Junior College, Banavar, Arasikere Taluk from the beginning of the academic year.

SRI B. SUBBAYA SHETTY (Minister for Education).—I wish to make the following statement.